

want to thank Chairman BURTON for his leadership as well as SUE KELLY for her hard work that led to the final passage of the Truth in Regulating Act in the House.

I congratulate my colleagues in the House and Senate for pulling together to get the job done.

ON DELAYS IN SENATE CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5107

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, all Democrats have cleared for final passage H.R. 5107, the Work for Hire and Copyright Corrections Act of 2000. I hope that the Senate will take up H.R. 5107 without further unnecessary delay. Representatives BERMAN and COBLE deserve credit, along with the interested parties, for working out a consensus solution in their work for hire copyright legislation. I do not know why the Senate has not confirmed their work and accorded their bill consent for final passage. Why the Republican majority has not taken up this measure since the middle of last week is another unexplained mystery.

As has been true with our bipartisan bill to provide bulletproof vest grants to law enforcement, S. 2014, and its House-passed counterpart, H.R. 4033, all Democrats have cleared these matters for Senate action. As has been true for some time with the Violence Against Women Act of 2000, S. 2787, all Democrats have cleared these matters for Senate action. The same is true with respect to S. 1796, the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, all Democrats have cleared these matters for Senate action. There are so many bills cleared by the Senate Democrats being held hostage without explanation by the Republican majority, it is hard to know where to begin and where to end. Here is this last week of the session the Senate could be making progress on a number of items but we remained stymied.

I regret that Congress did not complete its necessary work on the required appropriations bills before the beginning of the new fiscal year. We are again requiring the Government to exist from continuing resolution to continuing resolution. Along with the American people, I hope that we will complete our work before too much longer.

NBC AND FOX AND THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I also wish to say a word today about NBC and Fox, the two television networks that have decided they would not broadcast the Presidential debates live. I think it is deplorable, really, that networks, that use the public airwaves, and have some responsibility here with respect to the public good and public interest, have decided that Presidential

debates are not important enough to preempt other programming.

I notice that NBC said its local affiliates could make their own judgment. It is not as if NBC, according to Mr. Kennard, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, has not interrupted regular programming previously. In fact, they have interrupted sports programming previously. NBC, last evening, said: We have a contract to show a New York Yankees-Oakland Athletics playoff game. So they did not really want to, on a national basis, show the Presidential debate live. They did allow their affiliates to make that decision.

Mr. Kennard points out in an op-ed piece in the New York Times that in 1994 NBC was showing the NBA finals, the basketball finals, but they cut away from the basketball finals to follow that white Bronco that was meandering around the highways of Los Angeles with O.J. Simpson in the backseat. So they were able to cut away from the NBA finals to deal with the O.J. Simpson saga in that white Bronco, we remember so well, but they could not cut away from a playoff game—not the World Series; a playoff game—in baseball to televise the Presidential debate.

Fox News is another story. They did not give their affiliates any choice. From their standpoint, "Dark Angel" was important last night, entertainment programming. Apparently Fox News' entertainment programming is more important than televising the Presidential debates for the American people.

I agree with Bill Kennard, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. He wrote a piece that says: "Fox and NBC Renege on a Debt." It seems to me, in this country we ought to take this system of ours seriously. Presidential debates are very important. They have a wonderful and hallowed tradition in this country. It seems to me that television networks have a responsibility to the American people to provide live coverage of those debates.

I regret that NBC did not. And I would say to the NBC affiliate in Washington, DC, they decided to carry the debate. Thank you for doing that. Good for them. But Fox News did not give any of their affiliates that choice. I think they have made the wrong choice.

VISIT BY FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO CUBA

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I join with my colleague Senator ROBERTS to draw attention to a most interesting report on our country's policy toward Cuba. Some of my colleagues may know that a bipartisan group of former Members of Congress traveled to Cuba in September on a fact-finding

mission for the United States Association of Former Members of Congress. These four former members, John Brademas, Larry LaRocco, Fred Grandy, and Jack Buechner, did not travel as a group officially invited by the Cuban Government, but rather traveled on tourist visas, a distinction that allowed the delegation more flexibility to meet with representatives of a wide cross section of Cuban society, including religious and cultural leaders, as well as ordinary Cuban citizens.

Upon returning to the United States, the delegation wrote a detailed report concerning their visit to Cuba, and their recommendations on U.S.-Cuban policy. Remarkably, the recommendations contained in the report were unanimous, and were markedly similar to the recommendations made by two previous delegations in 1996, and 1999.

The report, which was released on September 5, states that "United States policy toward Cuba should be addressed on the basis first, of what is best for U.S. national interests, and second, what is best for Cuba and the Cuban people." It goes on to observe that, as a policy aimed at bringing about political change in Cuba, the regimen of comprehensive sanctions and the embargo have become increasingly anachronistic. It calls upon Congress and the Administration to begin a phased reduction of sanctions against Cuba, and a first step, recommends that current legislation on Capitol Hill to remove all restrictions on the sales or gifts of food and medicines be enacted. The report concludes with the observation that the delegation found "solid support among key independents" in Cuba for this action.

Among other recommendations, the delegation suggested that the United States establish a bank in Havana to authorize the sale of food and medicine, that additional direct flights between the U.S. and Cuba be facilitated, and steps taken to improve Internet communication between the two countries.

These recommendations were based on the perception by the traveling delegation that the embargo on food and medicine is hurting common Cuban citizens while failing to advance U.S. national security interests on the island. The consensus in Cuba is that Fidel Castro is not being affected by this embargo—he has all the food and medicine he needs. The Cuban people recognize that the embargo hurts only themselves, and are actively seeking help from the United States.

As we approach the final days of this session, hard-fought progress toward an easing of the embargo may still bear fruit. While the Senate considers important legislation in this area, I urge my colleagues to read both the excerpts of the report at the end of my speech and the full text of the Association report, which is available from the

United States Association of Former Members of Congress at 330 A Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20002. With that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that portions of the delegation's report be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

We, the four members of a delegation of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress (AFMC), visited Cuba from May 26 to June 3, 2000, to explore firsthand the current political, social and economic realities in that country and to consider what steps might be taken to improve relations between Cuba and the United States. Before traveling we were briefed by officials in the Department of State, key Members of Congress, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and officials of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC. The report you hold in your hands reflects the collective deliberations of the delegation, and lists six specific recommendations that we all endorse. As you will see, we did not attempt to tackle every issue involved in relations between our countries; in order to make concrete and well-founded recommendations, we focused on a core of matters that seemed particularly significant to us.

This fact-finding trip was the third and last in a series funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation to the AFMC. The other two trips were made in December 1996 and January 1999. Our recommendations closely parallel those of the previous two bipartisan delegations. To date, 15 former Members of Congress (eight Republicans and seven Democrats) have traveled to Cuba on these Ford Foundation-sponsored missions. The recommendations of all three delegations have been unanimous and are remarkably similar in terms of their implications for U.S. policy.

Unlike the two previous delegations, we did not travel as a group officially invited by the Cuban Government. We had the appropriate documentation from the United States Government, including a license from the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control. Although the Cuban government did not extend an official invitation to the delegation, we were issued tourist visas.

The unofficial character of the visit allowed us to control our own time, to have a wide variety of meetings and to gain a much better idea of what a cross-section of the Cuban population thinks. Unencumbered by the protocol demands that normally accompany an officially approved trip, we were free to visit a range of independent organizations, art centers, church and church-sponsored groups and research centers. We were also able to attend church services, visit markets, travel into the countryside and talk freely to private citizens. The people we met with ranged from an average woman attending an Elián González rally whom we engaged in spontaneous conversation to Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs; from the tour guide of the Partagás cigar factory in Old Havana to the Papal Nuncio; from the director of the government-sponsored cultural organization Casa de las Américas to the head of the Roman Catholic relief organization, Caritas; from an urban planner sympathetic to the current regime in Cuba to some of the most controversial figures—including Marta

Beatriz Roque, René Gómez Manzano, and Felix Bonne—and independent journalists living in that country today.

On the ground in Cuba, we heard a remarkably diverse array of voices and observed a highly complex set of political and social circumstances; nonetheless, we submit this report in the conviction that the implementation of our recommendations can only further the interests of both the United States and the people of Cuba.

JOHN BRADEMÁS,

D—Indiana.

J. BUECHNER,

R—Missouri.

FRED GRANDY,

R—Iowa.

LARRY LARROCCO,

D—Idaho.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are based on our extensive discussions during our trip to Cuba. Our recommendations closely parallel those of the two previous bipartisan delegations of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress.

1. Congress and the administration should begin a phased reduction of sanctions legislation, as defined in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (PL 102-484) and the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton, PL 104-114). As a first step, current legislation on Capitol Hill (H.R. 3140 and S. 2382) to remove all restrictions on the sales (for gifts) of food and medicines should be enacted.

2. Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a U.S. bank in Havana if legislation to authorize the sales of food and medicine is approved by Congress and the Administration.

3. Opportunities for people-to-people contact between citizens of the United States and Cuba should be expanded, particularly through two-way exchanges in the fields of education and culture. More links between educational, cultural and non-governmental institutions in our two countries should also be established.

4. The current ceilings on annual remittances from the United States to Cuba should be raised significantly, if not eliminated.

5. Steps should be taken to facilitate direct fights between the United States and Cuba.

6. Steps should be taken to improve Internet communication between the citizens of both countries. Initiatives aimed at enabling Cuban citizens to gain greater access to the Internet should be encouraged, and support should be given to individuals and entities involved in the creation of websites and other electronic platforms aimed at improving mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and Cuba.

SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIPS RELATIVE TO SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for initiatives to create a federal-state-local partnership relative to public school construction and renovation throughout America. At a time when unprecedented budget surpluses are being projected by budget leaders at both the White House and in Congress, it seems clear to me that some modest portion of these funds ought to be used to assist our school districts. In South Da-

kota, it has become increasingly difficult to pass school bond issues, given the fact that real estate taxes are already too high and our state's agricultural economy has been struggling. The result is an enormous backlog of school construction needs, and the costs of repair and replacement only increase with each passing year.

To propose a new school construction partnership is not to suggest some sort of "federalization" of K-12 public education. The decisions as to whether to replace or repair a school would remain with the local school districts where they belong, and by far the largest share of the expense would continue to be met by local taxpayers. Even so, a federal effort to reduce interest costs or otherwise participate in reducing the total cost of school construction could often times make the difference between a successful project or none at all. If the federal government were to simply block grant these funds, the dollars would have to be disbursed in such a broad manner that no school district would receive a sufficient amount of help to seriously make a real difference.

While I appreciate that school construction assistance must be targeted to help needy school districts first, I do want to convey my strong opinion that the eligibility requirements for a federal-local partnership should not be so restrictive as to eliminate the possibility of many of our school districts from participating. South Dakota has a great many school districts which are not completely impoverished, but yet find it almost impossible to pass a bond issue and otherwise adequately fund their education programs. This program should apply to more than just the extreme poverty situations of inner urban areas and remote rural areas. It should apply as well to the many small and medium size communities all across our country that seriously struggle with school construction and renovation needs.

I applaud and support these efforts to invest a small portion of our Nation's wealth in improved educational opportunities and facilities for all—this investment now, will result in improved academic performance, better citizenship and a stronger economy for generations to come.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.